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Reagan Denies Having Used 'End Run' Tactics in Push to Get Central America Aid

By DON SHANNON, *Times Staff Writer*

WASHINGTON—President Reagan, saying Congress would be irresponsible not to approve additional military aid for El Salvador, denied Friday that his Administration had tried to make an "end run" by rushing requests for Central America funding to a vote in the Senate Appropriations Committee. The Republican-led panel, in a sharp rebuff to the President, Thursday rejected an amendment to provide \$21 million for covert aid to Nicaraguan rebels and unanimously agreed to delay consideration of almost \$94 million in new military funds for El Salvador.

"We weren't trying to make an end run," Reagan told reporters on the White House lawn as he left by helicopter for Camp David, the presidential retreat in Maryland. When it looked as if the regular appropriations process could be too slow, he said, "we decided to do what so many of them do—ask them to put it on to a program that was already going through the legislature."

Nonetheless, the State Department acknowledged Friday that Secretary of State George P. Shultz had apologized for the maneuver to members of the Senate Intelligence Committee, which normally would have been first to consider the request for additional covert aid.

"What the secretary did was to express regret that the process of consultation had not gone forward," State Department spokesman John Hughes said. "It clearly alienated people who support the Administration's position." Hughes, while contending that the Salvadoran army is running short of arms and ammunition in the face of possible intensified guerrilla action before the presidential elections in El Salvador on March 25, declined to explain the urgency of securing funds for the Nicaraguan operation. That operation is conducted by CIA-financed insurgents, called contras, operating across the Honduran border.

At the White House, Reagan expressed confidence that "reason will prevail" when the Senate considers the funding requests next

week, and he repeated his warning that the additional money for El Salvador is desperately needed.

"I don't see how anyone could think it was responsible after all this time to actually envision the armed forces of Salvador running out of ammunition and material that is needed to defend the country against the guerrillas," Reagan said.

When asked if he now intends to use his emergency powers to provide the aid, Reagan said, "I certainly hope not."

The bypassing of the Intelligence and Foreign Relations committees prompted Republican Sens. Dave Durenberger of Minnesota and Nancy Landon Kassebaum of Kansas to join Democratic Sen. Daniel K. Inouye of Hawaii in announcing a move to tighten congressional control over aid to Central America.

Their plan would require the House and Senate to pass a resolution of approval every six months before either economic or military aid could be granted to Central American countries. The House Foreign Affairs and Senate Foreign Relations committees also would draw up semi-annual reports on how governments in the area were planning to use the aid and on progress in protecting human rights.